

My Old Home

About Writer

Lu Xun (1881-1936) is the pen name of the writer born as Zhou Shuren. He was born to a family with a strong Confucian background. His grandfather served as a high official in Beijing, and his father was also a scholar. Lu Xun has been considered China's greatest writer in the 20th century. He was a short story writer, essayist, and translator who is commonly considered the 'father of modern Chinese literature.' Known for his satirical observations of early 20th-century Chinese society, he is celebrated as a pioneer of modern vernacular Chinese literature and was one of the most important thinkers of his time. His popular novels and short story collections include *A Madman's Diary* (1918), *Kong Yiji* (1918), *Medicine* (1919), *Tomorrow* (1920), *An Incident* (1920), *A Storm in a Teacup* (1920), **Hometown** (1921). The story '**My Old Home**' is taken from the short story collection **Hometown**.

My Old Home by Lu Xun

'My Old Home' is a story about Xun's memories, from youth to middle age that depicts the conflict between memories and realities. The story describes how Xun feels while being away from home for many years. Upon arriving at his long-past home, his memories are forced to come to confront with the realities. His prior conceptions and understandings of the world come into conflict with his realities.

Lu Xun

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Characters:

Character	Roles
Xun	The narrator of the story
Xun's Mother	Mother of narrator
Old Woman	Second Sister Yang who ran the beancurd shop in kitty-corner
Hong'er	Nephew of Narrator
Runtu	A childhood friend of the Narrator(Xun)
Shuishen	Son of Runtu

Short Summary

'My Old Home' is a story written by Lu Xun. He told his memories, from youth to middle age that depicts the conflict between memories and realities in the story. The story describes how Xun feels while being away from home for many years. Upon arriving at his long-past home, his memories are forced to come to confront the realities. His prior conceptions and understandings of the world come into conflict with his realities.

In the story, Xun had memories of his childhood friends and his hometown. In his childhood, his hometown was lovely and beautiful where the green sky lies above. But now, when Xun went back to his old hometown after twenty years, he saw everything was changed. Green sky change into a vast and graying sky: they were drab, desolate, devoid of any semblance of life. There is no sign of progress. His memories deceive him.

Now, the home turned into an old home. Rationalizing the discrepancy between memory and that standing before him (realities), he tried to convince himself by saying, his home and village are alike. It's probably not so depressing as he seems

to feel at the moment either. Perhaps it's just that his attitude and mood have changed. He did not come here in a good mood. His sole purpose is to sell his home in an auction and went back to where he is doing his job. When he arrived at the home, his mother came out to greet him. His eight-year-old nephew Hong'er ran out from behind her. She was happy after seeing him and gave him tea. Hong'er, whom he had never seen before, stood off at a distance observing him.

He told his mother to go with him where he works. His mother was ready to go. She already had her baggage pretty much gathered together and ready to go. His mother already sold household furniture but she had not yet collected the money from the buyer. So, he rested for someday there and visit all his relatives. Her mother told him don't forget to see Runtu. Runtu always asks for him when he comes. Xun remembers all his previous memories with Runtu when his mother told him to visit Runtu. At the time of their teenage, He and Runtu went to catch the bird with a trick and also kill the zha. They went to collect shells—reds, blues, ghost-scarers. Runtu and Xun also went out to look for badgers and porcupines. After thirty-year, xun is going to meet Runtu.

When he was taking his afternoon tea, he saw Runtu and a little boy who is the son of Runtu. He was not at all the Runtu who lived in my memory. His memories had again deceived him. Runtu seemed twice as tall now. The round and ruddy face of yesteryear had already turned pale and grey, and it was etched with deep wrinkles. The rims of his eyes were swollen and red just like his father's.

Runtu hesitated in front of Xun. His expression was a mixture of happiness and melancholy(उदासी) after seeing Xun. His lips began to move, but not a single word came out. Finally, he assumed a very respectful attitude and addressed Xun in a loud clear voice: "Master!". Xun was shocked when Runtu says him 'Master'. He thought that the wall separated him. In their teenage, he called him just Li. They were living together like a brother. His son Shuishen and Xun's nephew Hong'er went for playing. Runtu sat when Xun's mother offered him to sit. Runtu hesitated for a bit but finally sat down. He gave him dried peas in a respectful manner like a lower-status person who offers something to a higher-status person. Here, we can see that there was discrimination between rich and poor people in China in 1921.

Runtu told all his pain when Xun asked him how was he doing. Runtu expressed all his pain in front of Xun. There is not enough to eat due to bad harvests which is one of the main factors of his poorness. Besides it, other factors are payment of tax, social responsibilities, too many children, famine, harsh taxes, soldiers,

bandits, officials, and gentry folk. Xun felt sad after listening to his pain and said to Runtu that he can take things whatever he required from his home. Runtu took all the things he selected on the boat to his home the next day. At the end of the story, Xun, his mother, and nephew depart for a place where he was working.

Main Summary

‘My Old Home’ is a story about Xun’s memories, from youth to middle age that depicts the conflict between memories and realities. The story describes how Xun feels while being away from home for many years. Upon arriving at his long-past home, his memories are forced to come to confront the realities. His prior conceptions and understandings of the world come into conflict with his realities.

In the story, Xun had memories of his childhood friends and his hometown. His hometown was lovely and beautiful where the green sky lies above in his childhood. But now, when Xun went back to his old hometown after twenty years, he saw everything was changed. Green sky change into a vast and graying sky: they were drab, desolate, devoid of any semblance of life. There is no sign of progress. His memories deceive him.

Now, the home turned into an old home. Rationalizing the discrepancy between memory and that standing before him (realities), he tried to convince himself by saying his home and village are always alike. It’s probably not so depressing as he seems to feel at the moment either. Perhaps it’s just that his attitude and mood have changed. He did not come here in a good mood. His sole purpose is to sell his home in an auction and go back to where he has done his job. When he arrived at the home, his mother come out to greet me. His eight-year-old nephew Hong’er ran out from behind her. She was happy after seeing him and gave him tea. Hong’er, whom he had never seen before, stood off at a distance observing me.

He said to his mother to go with him. He had already rented a house where he is working. Mother readily assented. She already had his baggage pretty much gathered together and ready to go. His mother already sold household furniture but she had not yet collected the money from the buyer. So, he rested for someday there and visit all his relatives. Her mother told him don’t forget to see Runtu.

Runtu always asks for him when he comes. Xun remembers all his previous memories with Runtu when his mother told him to visit Runtu.

A twelve-year-old boy, with a silver ring around his neck, and a pitchfork in his hand. It was no one rather than Runtu. Xun met him thirty years ago when he was ten years old and his father was still alive. As a teenager, Runtu killed zha by stabbing it. Both Runtu and Xun went to catch the bird with a trick. They went to collect shells—reds, blues, ghost-scarers. Runtu and Xun also went out to look for badgers and porcupines. They also went to guard the watermelon patch against zha. His father was “busy-monther” (Downhome, workers were divided into three categories: if they worked the whole year long for one family, they were “yearlong”; if they worked by the day, they were “short-timers”; and if they tilled their own land but worked for a specific family just during the holidays or when rents were collected, they were “busy-mothers.”)

Unfortunately, the first month of the New Year came to an end and Runtu had to go home. His father took him. Later on, he sent him a package of shells by way of his father, and some beautiful bird feathers too. And Xun also sent him some things a few times after that, but Xun never saw him again. But when his mother told him to visit Runtu because he had come home many times to ask for him. He remembered all the past time he spent with Runtu.

Xun saw an old woman. Her cheekbones protruded and her lips were thin. Wearing a pair of trousers (she hadn’t tied a skirt over them), hands on her hips, and legs wide apart. He didn’t remember her. Fortunately, his mother came back and introduced her to him. She told him that this old woman was Second Sister Yang. This is a woman who lived kitty-corner of place and ran the beancurd shop and so people called her the “Beancurd Beauty. Then remembered her. Here also, his memories deceive him. Now, everything was changed so he didn’t remember her. An old woman praised him for being rich. During the next day, clansmen and relatives who lived nearby came around to pay visits.

When he was taking his afternoon tea, he saw Runtu and a little boy who is the son of Runtu. He was not at all the Runtu who lived in his memory. Here also his memories deceive him again. Runtu seemed twice as tall now. The round and ruddy face of yesteryear had already turned pale and grey, and it was etched with deep wrinkles. The rims of his eyes were swollen and red just like his father’s. Xun knew that most farmers who worked close to the sea got that way because of the

wind. He was wearing a battered old felt hat, and his cotton clothes were so thin that he was shivering. His hands held a paper package along with his pipe. They were not the smooth and nimble hands that Xun remembered. Now they were rough, clumsy, and as cracked as pine bark.

Runtu hesitated. His expression was a mixture of happiness and melancholy(उदासी). His lips began to move, but not a single word came out. Finally, he assumed a very respectful attitude and addressed him in a loud clear voice: “Master!”. Xun was shocked when Runtu says him ‘Master’. He thought that the wall separated him. In his teenage, he called him only Li. They were living together like a brother. His son Shuishen and Xun’s nephew Hong’er went for playing. Runtu sat when Xun’s mother offered him to sit. Runtu hesitated for a bit but finally sat down. He gave him dried peas in a respectful manner like a lower-status person who offers something to a higher-status person. Here, we can see that there was discrimination between rich and poor people in China in 1921.

Runtu told all his pain when Xun asked him how was he doing. Runtu expressed all his pain in front of Xun. There is not enough to eat due to bad harvests which is one of the main factors of his poorness. It other factors are payment of taxes, social responsibilities, too many children, famine, harsh taxes, soldiers, bandits, officials, and gentry folk. Xun told Runtu that he can take things whatever he required from his home after listening to his pain. Runtu took all the things he selected on the boat to his home the next day.

Nine days later the time of his departure finally arrived. Runtu came early in the morning. Shuisheng wasn’t with him this time, but he’d brought along a five-year-old girl to keep an eye on the boat. Xun was so busy that he had no time to chat. Several other people came by, some to see us off, others to get things, and still. At the time of departure of the boat, Hong’er suddenly asked, “Uncle, when are we coming back?”. Xun replied, Coming back? What are you doing thinking about coming back before we’ve even left?” Xun knew that Hong’er miss his friend Shuisheng like him. Xun and his mother feel sympathy toward Runtu and begin to talk about Runtu. After some time, his mother and Hong’er are asleep but Xun keeps thinking about Runtu on his whole journey.

Moral/Theme of the story

My Old Home story shows the conflict between memories and realities. This story describes that things are not alike. They are changed with time. Our present conceptions and understanding may differ from future generations. This story also tells us that there is spiritual love between childhood friends rather than adult friends.